



Historic Downtown Lowell

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A VIBRANT AND DIVERSE DOWNTOWN



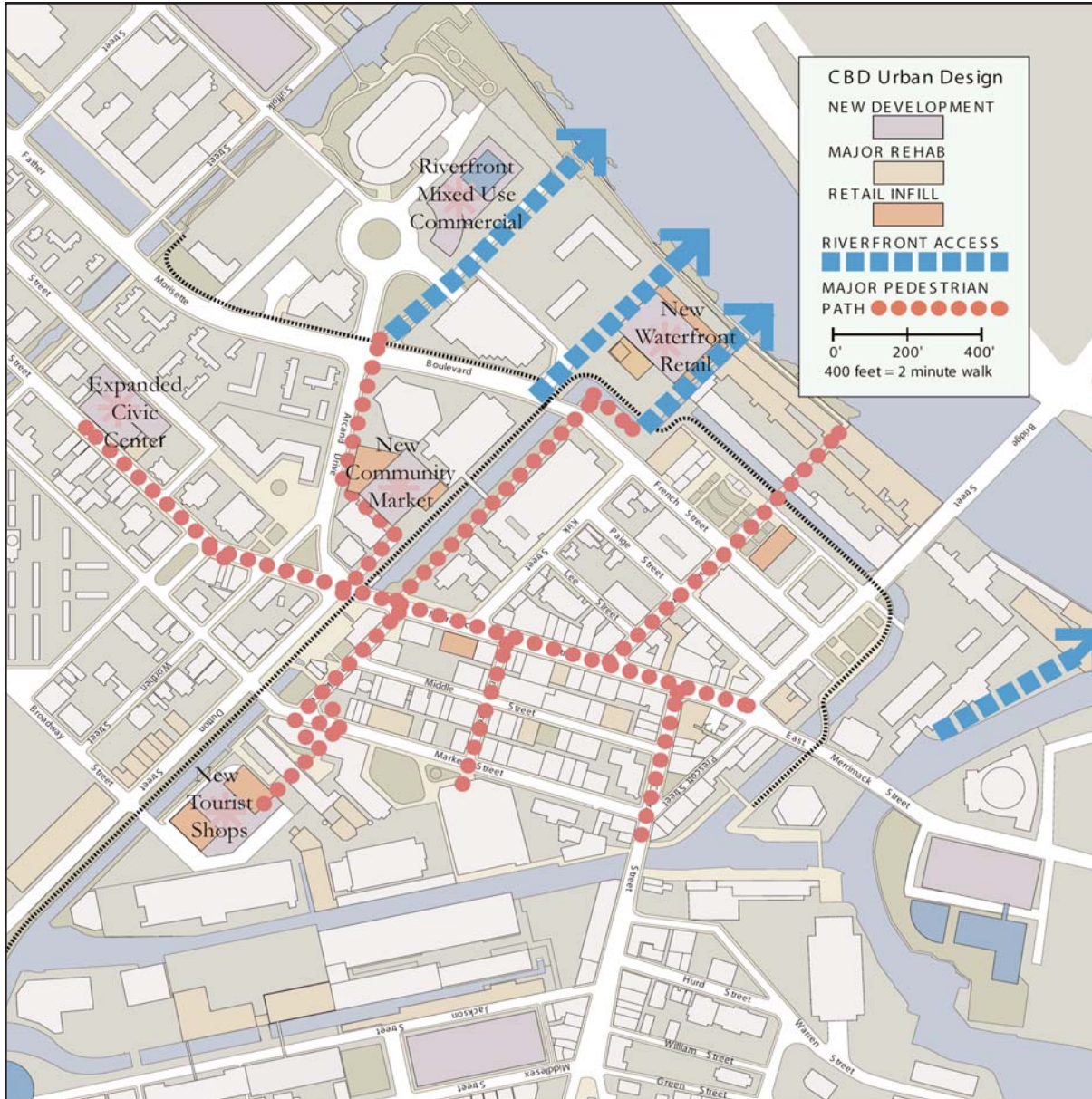
Goal Statement

Be it weekdays, weekends, daytime or nighttime, Downtown Lowell will be a vibrant community that provides an attractive, safe, and welcoming environment for people to work, shop, visit, and live.

Downtown Lowell has experienced a renaissance during the past few decades, using a successful strategy that combined historic preservation, entertainment, athletics, and cultural attractions with economic development. The establishment of the Lowell National Historical Park and the preservation and rehabilitation of commercial buildings and former textile mills for new commercial and residential space has helped to revitalize the downtown district. The construction of the Tsongas Arena, LeLacheur Park, and numerous museums has aided in the promotion of Downtown Lowell as a Destination City. Lowell must build upon these efforts to cultivate and expand the Downtown market in order to achieve its goal of creating a regional destination for employment, shopping and entertainment, and tourism.

The booming real estate market in Massachusetts and a growing interest in moving to urban areas by members of the creative class has caused a greater focus on residential development in the downtown area, which is fueling an overall economic development strategy. Historic mill buildings are being converted into apartments and condos, and former commercial structures reemerge as live-work spaces for a burgeoning artist community in Downtown Lowell. The increasing population of economically diverse downtown residents creates a strong base of potential customers that will support current and future retail stores and restaurants in the downtown area. Therefore, the development of unique Downtown housing opportunities will help to attract residents, and as a result, will lure new businesses to capture the economic potential of a growing residential population.

Figure 6-1
Downtown Urban Design



6.1 Recommendations and Action Steps:

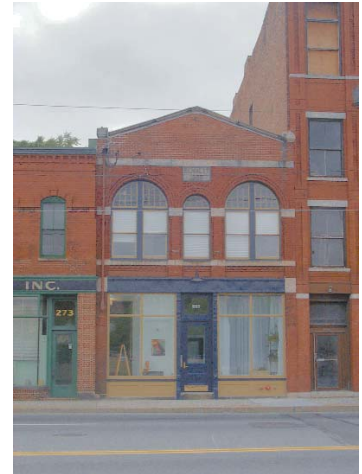
6.1.1 ENCOURAGE GREATER INCOME DIVERSITY IN DOWNTOWN LOWELL, WHICH WILL HELP TO CREATE AND SUPPORT A STRONG RETAIL MARKET, THROUGH THE CREATION OF ADDITIONAL MARKET RATE HOUSING UNITS.

Action Step: Stabilize the number of available affordable housing units by subsidizing the redevelopment of presently-vacant buildings that are less viable for unaided market development, while permitting existing affordable housing units to convert to market-rate rentals or condominium units.

Action Step: Continue to promote the conversion of historic mill buildings and vacant upper stories of commercial buildings in the downtown area to residential and artist live/work uses.

Action Step: Allow Federally and State subsidized housing to expire in situations where the project can feasibly be converted to market-rate housing when an alternative project can be completed that maintains the total number of affordable housing units.

Figure 6-2
Dutton Street Artists' Lofts



6.1.2 ATTRACT OFFICE TENANTS AND DEVELOPERS IN ORDER TO GENERATE NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND GROWTH IN DOWNTOWN.

Action Step: Lower development costs by working with the Lowell Historic Board, National Park Service, Massachusetts Historical Commission, American Institute of Architects, and other local and state partners to amend the State Building Code's provisions for historic properties (780 CMR 3409.0).

Figure 6-3
The Bon Marche Building



Action Step: Insure that every building within Downtown Lowell, especially those that contain or have the potential to contain office tenants, have access to high speed telecommunications infrastructure.

Figure 6-4
Office Space in Boott Mills



Action Step: Continue marketing and outreach to promote Downtown Lowell within regional and national development communities as a place where the City government is a willing and cooperative partner to quality private sector development projects.

6.1.3 INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF PARKING IN DOWNTOWN LOWELL TO MEET THE DEMAND CAUSED BY PROPOSED LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT, WHILE MINIMIZING ITS IMPACT ON THE PHYSICAL DOWNTOWN ENVIRONMENT.

Action Step: Improve management of on-street and garage parking.

**Figure 6-5
Future Parking Garage on Jackson and Middlesex Streets**



Action Step: Create a safe, attracting, and welcoming atmosphere in parking garages.

Action Step: Expand existing signage systems to direct people to parking facilities.

Action Step: Identify funding for new parking garage construction.

Action Step: Encourage retail uses at the ground levels of parking structures.

6.1.4 IMPROVE THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE IN DOWNTOWN LOWELL BY CREATING AN ATTRACTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO SHOPPING MALLS AND STRIP PLAZAS.

Action Step: Revise the zoning code to prevent office, institutional or residential uses from locating in prime ground floor retail locations.

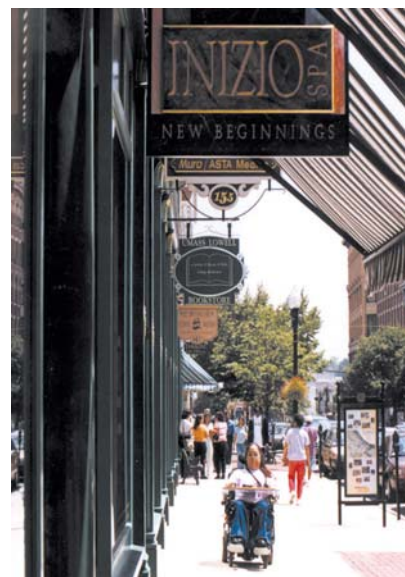
Action Step: Assist existing retailers by encouraging them and providing them with basic advice about marketing, accounting, and business management.

Action Step: Continue to offer and promote incentives for new businesses moving to Lowell, such as the Downtown Venture fund.

Action Step: Seek out national retail chains that are typically located in shopping malls and encourage them to relocate to sites in and near Downtown Lowell. Provide clear loading zones and assemble desirable properties for these purposes.

Action Step: Recruit a supermarket into Downtown Lowell to service the needs of a growing residential population.

**Figure 6-6
Shopping in Downtown Lowell**



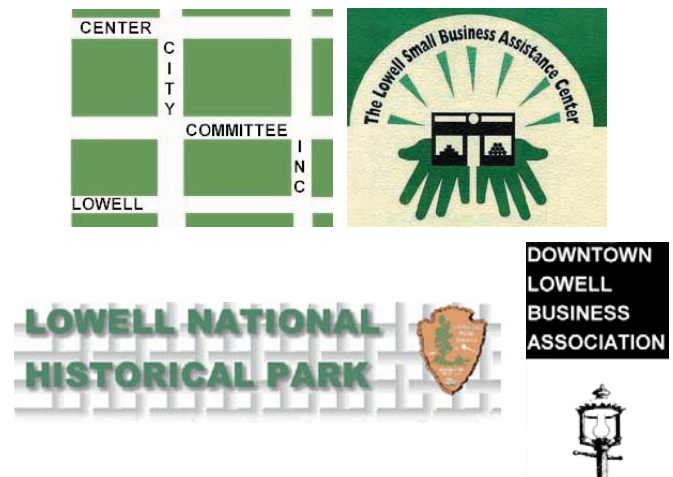
Action Step: Enhance Lowell's gateways to help welcome tourists and regional shoppers to the City.

6.1.5 DEVELOP COOPERATION AND COORDINATION AMONGST DOWNTOWN GROUPS, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREAS OF MARKETING, PROMOTIONS, AND MAINTENANCE.

Action Step: Create and promote a Business Improvement District, a Downtown Taskforce supported by the City-funded Downtown Manager, and the Cultural Organization of Lowell to support the arts community, coordinate events in Downtown Lowell, and build links between the arts community, retailers, and others.

Action Step: Increase Lowell's presence in the Boston tourism market. Define and eliminate the barriers preventing visitors to Boston from taking day trips to Lowell's attractions.

**Figure 6-7
Downtown Associations**



6.1.6 PROVIDE GREATER ACCESS TO AND FROM DOWNTOWN LOWELL FOR CITY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

Action Step: Maintain existing one-way traffic flow to enable full access to adjacent land uses, while minimizing conflict points at intersections.

**Figure 6-8
Countdown Pedestrian Signals**



Action Step: Implement traffic signal time and coordination modifications to achieve greater circulation efficiency.

Action Step: Install countdown pedestrian signal heads at traffic signals with high pedestrian traffic and improve crosswalks.

Action Step: Improve pavement markings and signage to help guide visitors to Lowell.

Action Step: Implement Phase II of the Downtown Lowell Streetscape Improvements Plan, which includes nested granite pavers, improved sidewalks, and pedestrian amenities.

Action Step: Increase access to public transportation opportunities including the Gallagher Terminal.

6.1.7 CAPITALIZE ON LARGE-SCALE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN DOWNTOWN LOWELL, WHICH WILL HELP TO EXPAND THE TAX BASE.

Action Step: Actively work to aggressively market eight major development concepts, as listed in the 2001 Downtown Lowell Master Plan: Dressing Mills Place, Riverplace Center, Arcand Market, Market Mills Place, Moody Street Civic Center, Merrimack Street Infill, John Street, and Massachusetts Mills.

Figure 6-9
Dressing Mills Place

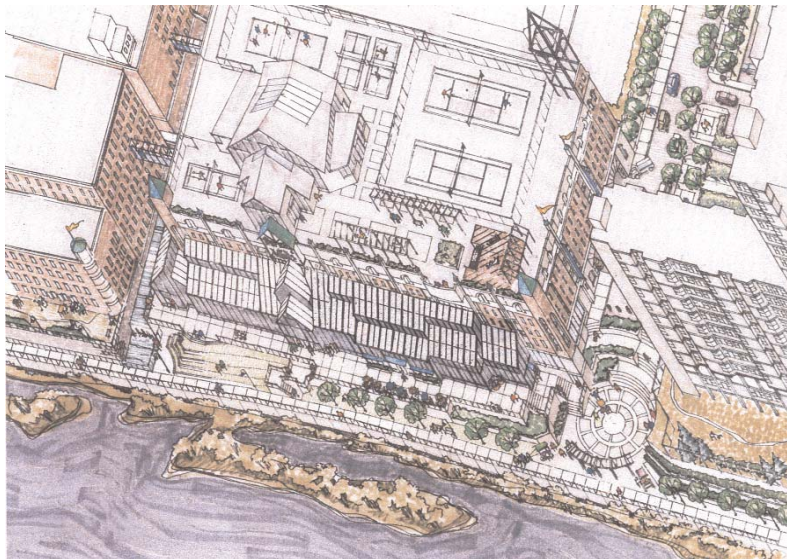


Figure 6-10
Downtown Development Concepts

